Order of Moose

When James J. Davis, ex-roller boy in the tinplate mill at Elwood, later United States senator from Pennsylvania, joined Crawfordsville Lodge No. 6, Loyal Order of Moose, in 1906, he was the 247th member of the entire order in the United States. He had definite ideas about making the Moose a fraternal order with a purpose, and he developed these ideas as he advanced in the order, rising from one rank to another until he became the supreme dictator of the order. In fifteen years he had increased the membership from the 247 to over half a million, and developed Mooseheart, located thirty-seven miles west of Chicago, a home for dependent children of Moose members, and later Moosehaven, a home for aged Moose near Jacksonville, Fla.

Mooseheart was dedicated July 27, 1915, by Vice President Thomas R. Marshall, and all to be seen, practically, was the circus tent in which the dedicatory exercises were held. Today Mooseheart represents an investment of $17,000,000, with an annual budget of $1,500,000. Over 1,100 children are members of the home—it is a home, not an institution—and in countless instances mothers of the children also enjoy the benefits of a real home.

Moosehaven was established on the banks of the St. John River, fourteen miles south of Jacksonville, in 1922, and it furnishes a home for aged members of the order who are unable to support themselves. More than 700 people have been admitted to the home since its institution, of whom about 15 per cent were women. Many marriages have occurred between members and in such cases a separate home is provided in neat houses which are part of the home. In many instances members who prefer to remain in their homes are given a pension which is paid to them monthly.

Davis Is Director.

When "Jim" Davis, as he is familiarly know among members of the order, became the chief of the organization he was given the title of supreme dictator. However, when totalitarian leaders began tearing Europe to pieces, the Moose leaders had the idea that the title of the supreme official smacked too much of totalitarianism and it was changed to governor, and by that title the head of the Mooseheart is known. The chief official in the local lodge is also the governor. Davis, through all his political life, as secretary of labor and as United States senator, has maintained his interest in the Moose and he is now the supreme director.

Each local lodge of the Moose has sick and accident benefits, Terre Haute Lodge No. 1009 paying $5 a week for twelve weeks and death benefits of $100, which the laws of the order require to be paid immediately. Each lodge is required by the laws of the order to set aside a special fund for these payments.

Along with other fraternal orders the Moose suffered from the depression and the local lodge did not escape. But it is recovering from a reduction in membership and new members are initiated regularly at the meetings of the lodge, which is located at 663½ Wabash Avenue in the Bindley Building. Its clubrooms are nicely furnished and the members gather there daily to enjoy the club privileges which include cards, pool and other indoor amusements.

The Loyal Order of Moose has 2,500 lodges located throughout the world and a membership of over 700,000 men and women of the highest character. With its weekly benefits provided by the local lodge, Mooseheart for dependent children and Moosehaven for its aged members its members claim that it is one of the most outstanding fraternal orders now existing.

George E. Armstrong, the well-known surveyor, is the governor of Terre Haute Lodge No. 1009; William E. Littlefield, deputy prosecuting attorney, is secretary, and Harry Dixon is club manager.

LODGES (W.V.) - ORDER OF THE MOOSE

Community Affairs File

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